CHINA AND THE WEST

By

LORD LINDSAY OF BIRKER

The Fifteenth
George Ernest Morrison
Lecture in Ethnology

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

LORD LINDSAY OF BIRKER, who was appointed a Senior Research Fellow in the Department of International Relations at the Australian National University in 1951, is a Master of Arts of Oxford, his special subject of study there being economics. After a period of post-graduate study at Trinity College, Cambridge, he undertook work connected with an industrial survey of South Wales, and then went to Yenching University, Peking, where he organized a course in philosophy, politics and economics, using methods similar to those used in Oxford. On the outbreak of war with Japan in December 1941, Lord Lindsay escaped and worked with the Chinese 18th Group Army in their base near Peking until 1944 when he moved to their Headquarters at Yenan. He returned to England in 1945, visited Canada and the United States where he lectured for a year at Harvard, and from 1948 to 1951 was Lecturer in Economics at University College, Hull.

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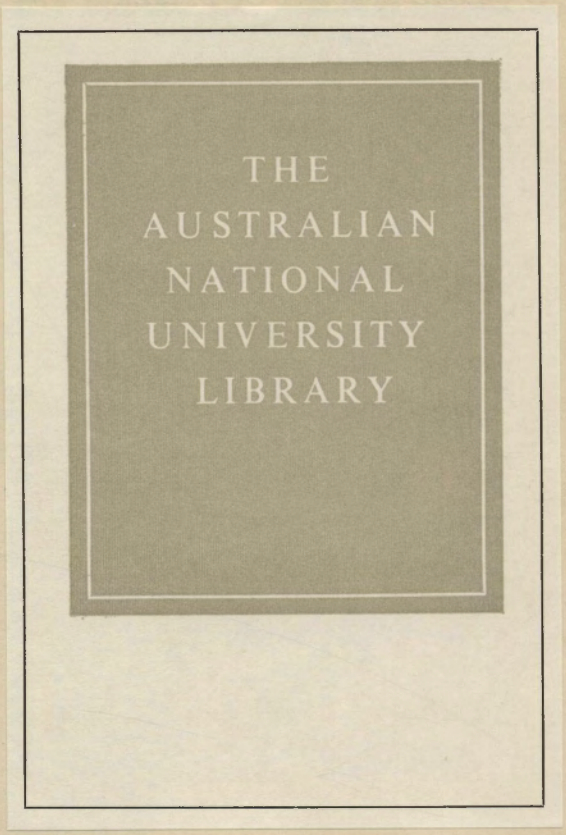

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CHINA AND THE WEST

I CHOSE the title "China and the West" because it seemed to be related to Morrison's work. Morrison himself, of course, I never met but I did know both his sons. Ian Morrison's ambition was to follow his father's career and he had already done a great deal to promote understanding between East and West when his work was cut short by his death in Korea.

I propose to start with some criticism of what seems to me a confusingly oversimplified account of relations between China and the West, namely the chapter entitled "The Far East and the West" in Arnold Toynbee's recent book, *The World and the West*. Toynbee describes the contacts between the Far East and the West in terms of two encounters. The first in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in which the Far East first started to accept and then decisively rejected elements from Western culture and the second in the nineteenth century which ended with Far Eastern acceptance of at least Western technology. He argues that, "In the nineteenth century the Western civilization presented itself primarily as a strange technology; in the sixteenth century it had presented itself primarily as a strange religion." Technology, he believes, was accepted while religion was not, partly because the alternative to accepting Western technology was a high probability of becoming the colony of some Western power, partly because ". . . the penetrative power of a strand of cultural radiation is in inverse ratio to this strand's cultural value." It seemed possible to the leaders of Far Eastern countries to accept Western technology without accepting anything else. In the long run this belief proved to be mistaken and the acceptance of Western technology was followed by developments which seemed to be "triumphs for the secularized Western civilization of the Late Modern Age." But because Western technology had been accepted without Western religion the final results were disappointing; "In Japan it bred a disastrous militarism; in China it bred a disastrous political corruption." And Toynbee's general conclusion seems to be that the only hope of satisfactory results from the encounter of Western and Far Eastern civilization lies in the line of approach

which the Jesuits tried in China when they tried to present Western religion in a form that could be integrated with the Chinese cultural tradition.

All this is one of those theoretical schemes which look very nice until one tries to make them fit the facts. It may not be entirely fair to Toynbee to judge him on the basis of a popular exposition of a topic which will be treated in detail in the forthcoming volumes of *A Study of History* but some of the discrepancies with fact are so glaring that it is hard to see how any more detailed version could remove them. One obvious defect of Toynbee's scheme is that it lumps China and Japan together as instances of Far Eastern civilization. It is certainly true that Chinese and Japanese culture have many elements in common and for certain purposes it might be reasonable to class them together, but their reactions to the West have been very different. And it is obvious that Toynbee was thinking primarily of Japan. In Japan the first contacts with the West did produce a fairly large Christian community which was only eliminated after a serious civil war. And the renewed contacts in the nineteenth century did produce a very rapid acceptance of Western technology. What is doubtful is whether Japanese militarism could be attributed to the acceptance of "secular Western civilization". Japanese militarism certainly used Western technology, but if one looks at the internal struggles in Japan in the 1920's and 1930's one finds that the groups responsible for militarism were mainly composed of people who rejected "secularized Western civilization" in favour of a return to some purely Far Eastern elements in Japanese culture. The representatives of "secularized Western civilization" may not have opposed military adventures which seemed likely to bring definite economic advantages but they were usually a restraining influence on the militarist leaders who were violently opposed to what they called the "materialist civilization of the West". It is interesting that the extreme nationalist and militarist groups were critical of the emperor's hobby of marine biology on the ground that such scientific interests were contrary to the national spirit of Japan. They considered that in periods of national crisis the emperor should spend his spare time studying Confucian texts. Given their assumptions, this attitude of the extreme nationalists was quite logical. Because the emperor

was the sort of person who made a hobby of a scientific subject he was out of sympathy with the mysticism and mythology which the extreme nationalists identified with the "national spirit of Japan" and his record was one of consistent, though largely ineffective, opposition to militarism.

For China, Toynbee's scheme does not fit the facts at all. The Jesuits obtained their position in Chinese society under the late Ming and early Ch'ing emperors, not by offering religion but by offering technology. They first made their reputation by their obvious superiority in practical astronomy and they were valued for their advice about making better types of cannon, making maps of the Chinese empire, and so on. They were acceptable because they combined this offer of technology with qualifications as educated men in Chinese culture. Their success in spreading religion was comparatively small and they never produced anything like the strong Christian community of early seventeenth-century Japan. As soon as the religious aspects of their work became prominent they were eliminated from Chinese society leaving almost no permanent impression behind.

For the nineteenth century it is equally unsatisfactory to lump China and Japan together. Some Japanese had retained an interest in Western knowledge even when contacts were restricted to the small Dutch community and Japan started the large-scale importation of Western technology very soon after the military power of the West had compelled the opening of closer contacts. China was never so isolated from Western contacts but simply showed no interest in Western knowledge. Lord Macartney's mission at the end of the eighteenth century contained a number of technical experts; it was hoped they could contribute to the improvement of Sino-British relations, but no one was interested in them. Even the knowledge which had been brought by the Jesuits seems to have been largely forgotten by the mid-nineteenth century. There was no Chinese development of the mathematics and science they had introduced and even the factual knowledge of the West had largely been lost. Lin Tse-hsü was a high ranking official with special responsibilities for dealing with the West. One would have expected him to use such knowledge about the West as was available in China. But his book on "How to deal with the foreign barbarians" devotes whole chapters to speculations about

the elementary facts of Western geography which could have been settled by a very brief study of the maps prepared by the Jesuits. There are discussions of whether the different Chinese transliterations for Spain refer to one country or several countries, whether the Portugese come from Europe or the East Indies, and so on. History is equally vague. The Americans are thirteen native tribes who revolted against the British.

Again, Chinese experience of the military strength of the West came earlier than the Japanese and was much more severe. But it was only after considerable delay that a few of the more enterprising Chinese officials developed an interest in Western technology and their attitude remained exceptional almost to the end of the century. The first railway built by the Japanese government was opened in 1872. In 1875 the Chinese government pulled up the tracks of the first railway in China which had been built by foreigners without official permission.

It is also very misleading to ignore the religious elements in the nineteenth-century encounter between China and the West. Ideas derived from Western missionaries played a part in making the T'ai-p'ing rebellion something more than the traditional peasant revolt. And the final penetration of Western ideas, and even of Western technology, into Chinese society was very largely the product of educational work by Christian missions. It could be argued that the phase of mission activity which started in the nineteenth century would have been more effective if the missionaries had modelled themselves more on the seventeenth and eighteenth-century Jesuits, if they had qualified as educated men in the Chinese tradition before trying to present their religion to China. But, whatever their shortcomings, the work of the missionaries has been a very important factor in the development of China during the last century.

Thus, Toynbee's description of the encounter between Western and Chinese civilizations depends on generalizations which simply do not correspond to the facts. The real question which any more satisfactory theory must try to answer is, why was it so difficult for the traditional Chinese society to take over and use Western science and technology? In some cases these elements of Western culture seemed to be not the most but the least penetrating. The empress dowager, for example, was a staunch anti-Westerner but her more private residence just

outside Peking was a building in Western style full of bad Western art of the type one associates with seaside boarding houses in England but on a much more expensive and correspondingly more hideous scale.

Before discussing this question directly it is worth noting that one point of difference between the earlier and later contacts between China and the West is that during the earlier contacts the influence was by no means one way. Going back far enough, there was a period when the flow of technical knowledge was from China to Europe even though this was not the result of direct contacts. And the establishment of direct contacts produced a great deal of European interest in China. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries there was a considerable importation of Chinese art which was widely copied. It became fashionable to lay out gardens in the Chinese style with Chinese bridges and buildings. Chinese society and Chinese thought, which became known through the reports of the Jesuits and their translations of the Chinese classics, were studied with interest and influenced such men as Leibniz and Voltaire. In the nineteenth century the West had a very great influence on China while China had almost no influence on the West. Even Chinese art, which had been admired in the eighteenth century, was despised in the nineteenth. A Western writer on China could say, "Painting is rather behind sculpture, but neither can be said to have advanced beyond rude imitations of nature. Even the best painters have no proper idea of perspective or of blending light and shade . . ." What was it which made European society of the early eighteenth century responsive to elements in Chinese culture, while Western society of the nineteenth century was largely uninterested in it?

It is possible to suggest an answer to this question. In the thought of many people in eighteenth-century Europe the golden age was in the past, under the Roman empire. And for people who thought in terms of the Roman empire as an ideal, China had the attraction of an obviously successful civilization. Chinese history had nothing like the Dark Ages in Europe. There had been periods of confusion and barbarian invasion but the general standards of material civilization in China had remained at the sort of level which Europe had

attained in classical times and was only regaining in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In contrast to Europe divided into small warring states, China, like the Roman empire, showed a vast area at peace under one government. The admiration was increased by the fact that the information available in Europe tended to idealize conditions in China. The Jesuits reported China as it ought to have been according to Confucian theory more than China as it actually was. But even the imperfect reality could be admired. Chinese officials under the early Ch'ing emperors may have been very imperfect examples of the Confucian virtues but they were still providing administration which was fairly competent and not too dishonest by the European standards of the early eighteenth century. It was possible to look on China as a successful example of the benevolent despotism which attracted European thinkers of that period.

By the nineteenth century Western society was being transformed by science and technology while Chinese society had remained at the eighteenth-century level. Even if the standards of Chinese government had not declined, which in fact they did, a civilization which had appeared successful to eighteenth-century Europe would have appeared backward to nineteenth-century Europe. If one is trying to describe the traditional Chinese society in a single phrase one could do so by saying that it got stuck at the sort of level which Europe reached in the eighteenth century. And the comparison goes a little deeper than the purely material level. Chinese readers of eighteenth-century European novels find the society depicted in them much less different from the traditional Chinese pattern than is the modern Western world.

This leads to a variant of the previous question. Why was it that China, at one time ahead of the West in technology and having the knowledge of Western science available to it in the early eighteenth century, failed to develop in the same sort of way as the West? A possible explanation can be found in the structure of traditional Chinese society.

One obvious difference between the social structure of imperial China and that of eighteenth-century Europe, or nineteenth-century Japan, was that China belonged to the class of societies in which power and wealth depend on position in the apparatus

of government rather than on property. This can be illustrated by two quotations. The first is from Williams' *The Middle Kingdom,* first published in 1882. "Notwithstanding the fact that Chinese society is so homogeneous when considered as distinct from the sovereign, inequalities of many kinds are constantly met with, some growing out of birth or property, others out of occupation or merit, *but most of them derived from official rank.*"* The second is from Kinglake's *Eothen,* describing travels in the Ottoman empire in the 1830's. "In the Ottoman dominions there is scarcely any hereditary influence except that belonging to the family of the Sultan; and wealth, too, is a highly volatile blessing, not easily transmitted to the descendants of the owner. From these causes it results that *the people standing in the place of nobles and gentry, are official personages . . .*"* Property counted for more in the Chinese than in the Ottoman empire but in both, official position was much more important than property.

In the Western world this type of social structure has only appeared in recent times, in the totalitarian states. The distinctive feature of the Soviet Union and its satellite states is not the absence of a privileged group—indeed privilege is more marked than in most democratic societies. It is the complete dependence of privilege on position in the apparatus of government. The right-wing totalitarian states in the West never went so far in eliminating property rights but even there position in the ruling party was becoming steadily more important as compared with the ownership of property.

The traditional Chinese society could be described as one of the most successful examples of a totalitarian system, successful in terms of ability to survive. In support of this statement that imperial China was a totalitarian system I will quote some further passages from Williams because he was a nineteenth-century American who cannot reasonably be suspected of starting with an idea of totalitarianism for which he selected supporting evidence from his observations of China. He considered that, "The institutions of China are despotic and defective, and founded on wrong principles." But he recognized that the stability of Chinese society was something which needed explanation. "We must indeed look into its structure in

* My italics.

order to discover the causes of this stability, inasmuch as here we have neither a standing army to enforce nor the machinery of a state religion to compel obedience toward a sovereign. A short inspection will show that the leading principles by which the present administration preserves its power over the people, consist in a system of *strict surveillance* and *mutual responsibility* among all classes." The passages describing this system of control could be transplanted unchanged into an article on present-day life in a totalitarian state without appearing in any way remarkable except for their old-fashioned literary style. To give a few selections:— "The man who knows it is almost impossible, except by entire seclusion, to escape from the company of secret or acknowledged emissaries of government, will be cautious of offending the laws of the country, knowing, as he must, that though he should himself escape, yet his family, his kindred or his neighbours will suffer for his offence. . . . The effect of these two causes on the mass of the people is to imbue them with a great fear of the government, both of its officers and its operations. . . . This mutual surveillance and responsibility, though only partly extended throughout the multitude, necessarily undermines confidence and infuses universal distrust. . . . Thus, with a state of society at times on the verge of insurrection, this mass of people is kept in check by the threefold cord of responsibility, fear, and isolation. . . ."

A system which relies only on this sort of control will not be stable but only meta-stable. If control is ever relaxed the system is likely to collapse. And Williams realized that the principles of strict surveillance and mutual responsibility "are added to in their efficiency . . . by a remarkable spirit of loyal pride in their own history, and a general system of political education and official examinations." In more modern language, the Chinese empire was so stable because it had been largely successful in realizing one of the objectives of totalitarian society, the universal acceptance of a single official ideology.

One can find in official Confucianism something very like the Marxist doctrine of the withering away of the state. In support of this statement I will give some quotations from Paul Linebarger's *The Political Doctrines of Sun Yat-sen,* because he is a witness who combines close acquaintance with China and strong

sympathies for the traditional Chinese culture. Linebarger is describing the Confucian system:— "Government, once *cheng ming* has been set in motion, is not a policy making body. There is no question of policy, no room for disagreement, no alternative; What is right is apparent. Politics, in the narrow sense of the word, ceases to be a function of government; only administration remains.

"Secondly, government needs only to administer for two purposes. The chief of these is the maintenance of the ideology. Once right views are established, no individual is entitled to think otherwise. Government must treat the heterodox as malefactors. . . . To protect the society actively against discord, the government must encourage the utterance of the accepted truth. The scholar is thus the highest of all the social classes; it is he who maintains agreement and order. . . .

"The other function of government in maintaining the ideology lies in the necessity of dealing with persons not affected by the ideology. Barbarians are especially formidable, since both heretics and criminals may be restored to the use of their reason, while barbarians may not, so long as they remain barbarians. Accordingly, the government is also a defence system. . . .

"Government itself . . . has no right to do wrong. The truth is apparent to everyone, and especially to the scholars. In this wise the Chinese governments were at the mercy of their subjects. No divine right shielded them when public opinion condemned them. . . .

"The consequence of these teachings was such that we may say, without sacrificing truth to paradox, that the aim of Chinese government was anarchy—not in the sense of disorder, but in the sense of an order so just and so complete that it needed no governing. . . .

"In the old Chinese society control of the individual was so much an ideological one, that political control was infinitely narrower than in the West. But, in order to effectuate ideological control, there must be an organization which will permit pressure to be exercised on the individual in such a compelling manner that the exercise of external coercion becomes unnecessary. In a society in which the state has withered away, after an enormous expansion in the subject matter of its control, the totalitarian state is succeeded by the totalitarian tradition, if,—

and the qualification is an important one – the indoctrination has been so effective that the ideology can maintain itself in the minds of men without the continuing coercive power of the state to uphold it. . . . control of the individual will devolve upon those persons making up his immediate social environment. . . ."

This is a rather long summarizing of a considerably longer exposition. But the similarity it shows between Confucian and Communist doctrine is important as evidence for the totalitarian side of the old Chinese social system. It also explains the great importance of the old imperial examinations. The way to power lay in obtaining a position in the government, and the way to position in the government was through a classical education which produced people fully indoctrinated with the official ideology.

All this gives a satisfactory explanation of the stability of the old social system and its ability to re-establish itself even when some period of civil war or barbarian invasion had temporarily destroyed the ability of the government to exercise effective control over its subjects. Everyone with sufficient education to provide leadership or to run the administration was a believer in the traditional system and desirous of preserving it. The fact that "educated men form the only aristocracy in the land", as Williams expressed it, prevented any rival leadership from appearing, for a talented boy from a poor family always had the chance of rising to the highest positions even though the chance may have been small. One can see the same influence in Western society. The number of people who rose from unskilled worker to millionaire was small even in the periods of most rapid capitalist expansion. But so long as people thought in terms of this possibility there was little serious dissatisfaction with capitalism.

One reason for the internal weakening of Chinese government in the nineteenth century was the spread of the practice of selling degrees in the imperial examination system. This restricted the career open to talent and produced numbers of educated men who did not have the chance of a normal official career. In spite of this the prestige of Confucian learning among the masses was so high that it persisted long after the old system had collapsed. In the early 1940's the Communists tried the experiment of what they called "People-managed schools" in which the vil-

lage council was allowed to choose the curriculum. They found it embarrassing that a good many villages wanted to follow the old style classical education beginning with the San Tse Ching which had little practical value except as the first stage of preparation for the old civil service examinations which had been abolished a generation earlier.

At this point I might deal with some possible objections to the description of imperial China as a totalitarian state. It might be argued that it was unfair to call the system totalitarian when it was obviously much less inhuman than modern totalitarian states and when, unlike modern totalitarian systems, it had proved itself capable of reaching the very highest levels in some fields of art. As against this, if a totalitarian system is defined as one in which power depends on status in the apparatus of government and in which the ruling group maintains its power by securing the acceptance of a single official ideology, then there is a great deal of evidence for classifying imperial China as totalitarian. And it is possible to give reasons for the differences from modern totalitarianism. Though all totalitarian systems use an official ideology to maintain the power of the ruling group this does not mean that the differences between the various official ideologies are unimportant. Confucianism, even in the form it developed as an official ideology, was a more humanistic system than Marx-Leninism or the theories of National Socialism. Also, while Confucianism was the dominant force in the old Chinese society, it was not the only force. Government was never efficient enough entirely to eliminate an underworld of secret societies and banditry and some of the best Chinese literature was connected with this opposition to the official system. Even among the ruling group Confucianism was usually mixed with elements of Buddhism and mystical, anarchistic Taoism. It might be argued that Chinese civilization produced great art in spite of and not because of being totalitarian.

It might also be objected that I have said nothing of feudalism in the old Chinese society. This omission was deliberate because feudalism, in the sense of power based on the ownership of land, only existed at the lower levels of Chinese society and even then only through the tolerance of the group whose power depended on official status. A landlord family might dominate

one village or occasionally even one hsien (and there are about 2,000 hsien in China). But landownership very seldom gave power at the provincial level and never at the national level. A high proportion of officials came from landlord families and the imperial bureaucracy did not try to extend its direct control below the hsien level and left local administration in the hands of the local gentry. But power based on landownership could never oppose power based on official status. Even at the village level the power of landlords depended to a large extent on the combination of land ownership with official positions under the central bureaucracy or with money lending or merchant enterprises. In Japan, where there was something much more like European feudalism, it was possible for local nobles to protect Christianity in the sixteenth century or to experiment with Western technology in the nineteenth century. In China, even the largest landowners would not have been able to experiment with policies of which the government did not approve. The men who started to experiment with Western technology in the nineteenth century were not landowners but officials. Feudal influence may have increased under the Republic when government became disorganised but even then it was not a dominant force.

The explanation of Chinese society in terms of feudalism, is, in fact, part of a doctrinaire Marxist scheme. The frankest expression of this can be found in a book by Roy who was one of the Comintern advisers in China in the 1920's. He argues that there must be feudalism in China because, "Otherwise, the monistic principle of Historical Materialism would be disproved, and the Marxian perspective of history, that Communism is the common destiny of the human race, would be untenable."

The totalitarian features of the old Chinese society explain its extraordinary stability so long as it was threatened only by internal revolt or pressure from less civilized Central Asian societies. They can also explain the inability to absorb Western science or technology. Any organization tends to become very conservative when power depends entirely on official position and promotion on the goodwill of superiors in the organization. This can be seen in Western organizations just as much as in Chinese but in most Western societies conservatism has been

limited by competition. If new ideas are rejected by one organization they may be taken up by another, and any organization which is too conservative is likely to find itself in difficulties within a period normally less than a single lifetime. In a totalitarian system ideas which are rejected by the single official organization may have no opportunity at all for developing. People in the West with a strictly classical education have often been quite as unsympathetic to science as the typical Confucian scholar official. Gladstone, for example, could see no point at all in Faraday's researches which, within Gladstone's own lifetime, were to produce the electrical industry. If British society had been so organized that the only way to large-scale power or wealth had been through examinations in writing Latin verse, it is extremely unlikely that science or technology would have developed in England. And the classically educated British ruling class did make very little contribution to their development.

The development of new ideas was made even more difficult in China because the social structure depended on the maintenance of the official ideology so that any new developments were, potentially, a direct threat to the whole régime. There had been developments in mathematics and technology in China long before there were any contacts with the West. But the early Jesuit missionaries found that there was a law forbidding the possession of books on mathematics without special imperial permission. Even though the law was not strictly enforced its existence would have been a serious obstacle to any development of a flourishing Chinese school of mathematics. Again, many individuals in China were keenly interested in the Western scientific knowledge which became available in the seventeenth century. If they had been able to form some Chinese equivalent of the Royal Society there might have been an independent development of science in China. But any such association would almost certainly have been condemned by the authorities as a threat to the established ideology.

In *China's Destiny*, Chiang Kai-shek argues that it was only the alien Manchu dynasty which prevented Chinese development from keeping pace with the West. And there is some element of truth in this. The Manchus were alien invaders who realized that their power depended on keeping the support of

the Confucian scholar class. This did tend to make them supporters of the most rigid Confucian orthodoxy, just as, at the present time, the most doctrinaire Communists are often those who feel that they have a bourgeois background to live down. It is just possible that, if China had been under a native dynasty with a few exceptionally capable emperors, the Confucian orthodoxy could have been sufficiently modified to allow an integration of the old system with elements of science and technology. But it is not more than a remote possibility. The alien dynasty was only one of the influences producing an extreme conservatism.

By the nineteenth century the old ruling group had got into an almost impossible position. On the one hand they could not make any effective resistance to armed pressure from the West without taking over and using many Western ideas and techniques. On the other hand it was extremely difficult to take over Western ideas or even to make any realistic compromise with the West without endangering the whole system on which their power depended. I have compared the Confucian scholar-official to the Westerner with a strictly classical education but the Chinese classical education incapacitated people from understanding science or technology far more completely than a Western classical education. There is an interesting passage in Reginald Johnston's *Twilight in the Forbidden City* in which he explains the rapid descent into poverty of the old Manchu aristocracy by the fact that their classical education had made them incapable of understanding even elementary arithmetic so that they were quite unable to prevent their servants from swindling them. If imperial China had tried to respond to Western pressure in the same way as Japan it would have involved considerable delegation of power to men whose training had put them outside the official ideology on whose universal acceptance the stability of Chinese society depended. And, in fact, the old system only survived for a few decades after serious attempts at using Western techniques were started towards the end of the nineteenth century.

The Chinese ruling group reacted as people often do in a really difficult situation, by refusing to face realities. In most of the conflicts with Western powers in the nineteenth century one finds the Chinese authorities trying to force events into the

traditional pattern under which the only possible relation of foreign powers to the Chinese empire was one in which the foreigners acknowledged Chinese superiority. And this attitude was maintained even when its only possible result was to produce even greater humiliation for the Chinese authorities and even greater loss of real power. By the end of the century foreigners were making practical assertions of superiority quite as far-reaching as those which the Chinese authorities claimed in theory but were impotent to enforce. Consider Morrison's description of his trip from Szechuan to Burma in 1894. "On my journey I made it a rule, acting advisedly, to refuse to occupy any other than the best room in the inn. . . . So, too, at every inn I insisted that the best table should be given me, and, if there were already Chinese seated at it, I gravely bowed to them, and by a wave of my hand signified that it was my pleasure that they should make way for the distinguished stranger . . . I am perfectly sure that, by never verging from my position of superiority, I gained the respect of the Chinese, and it is largely to this I attribute the universal respect and attention shown me during the journey. For I was unarmed, entirely dependent upon the Chinese, and, for all practical purposes inarticulate. As it was, I never had any difficulty whatever." In fairness to Morrison it is clear that he realized that he was behaving in a way that would not have been tolerated in Western countries. He concludes his description of one incident on his journey by saying, "Imagine a Chinese in a Western country acting with the bluster that I did, although in good humour; I wonder whether he would have been treated with the courtesy that those Chinamen showed to me!" And Morrison's later career showed that he was very different from the typical "old China hand".

This aspect of relations between China and the West could be used as an illustration of the sort of chain reaction that often complicates international relations. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the attitude of the Chinese ruling group made conditions almost intolerable even for those Westerners who would have been ready to deal with China on a basis of equality and mutual understanding. And the Western powers were not prepared to tolerate this situation when they had the force to change it. But the Western reaction produced a foreign

community in China of which some sections made equally arrogant claims of superiority and expressed them with much worse manners. Naturally the Chinese were not prepared to tolerate this situation when they had the force to change it. And now one could draw many analogies between the policies of the present Peking government and those of the Chinese bureaucracy before the Opium War. The problem here is how to break a vicious circle for which both parties must share some responsibility. It is unfortunate that the "old China hand" mentality persisted in some of the higher circles of foreign officialdom after it had largely disappeared elsewhere in the West. The man who was rumoured to be the United Kingdom government's choice for first ambassador to the new Peking government was an official who frequently talked in terms of such arrogant racial superiority that even fellow-Westerners found it hard to keep their tempers.

To return to developments in China; it did prove impossible to combine elements of Western culture with the old totalitarian society and the old system collapsed as soon as a generation of Chinese appeared who had been trained in the use of Western techniques. The first group to come to power after the failure of Yuan Shih-k'ai's attempt to restore the imperial system were the warlords. Among them, Wu P'ei-fu was the only important figure with a degree from the old imperial examination system. But several had been trained at the Paoting Military Academy which had been established under the empire in an attempt to produce a foreign style Chinese army. The Kuomintang was very much more Westernized. Sun Yat-sen went to school in Hawaii and had a medical degree from Hongkong University. Chiang Kai-shek had military training in Japan and a great many of the Kuomintang leaders were men with degrees from Western universities. In the Communist Party the proportion of leaders with foreign training was probably no greater than in the Kuomintang but the proportion influenced by traditional Chinese education was smaller and the Communists went much further than the Kuomintang in rejecting the traditional Chinese system in favour of elements borrowed from the West.

A great deal of recent Chinese history could be explained in terms of the generalization that groups with greater training in the use of Western techniques have always been able to

overthrow groups whose use of Western techniques has been inhibited by attachment to the traditional Chinese system. And Western techniques of administration have been quite as important as technology in the narrow sense. The power of Western societies has depended not simply on technology but also on the ability to secure efficient working from large scale organization. And this depends on what Mary Parker Follet called the "de-personalization of authority",—on people acting in terms of doing what is necessary to promote the objectives of the organization rather than in terms of obeying a personal superior. In a large organization effective co-operation between the people composing it can only be secured by everyone accepting certain rules. The rules may be to some extent arbitrary and conventional but effective co-ordination between people who have no direct personal contacts depends on everyone in the organization keeping to the same conventions. All this means that the efficient working of a large scale organization demands a certain attitude of mind among the responsible people in it. There must be a certain amount of loyalty to the organization as opposed to loyalty to individual leaders, and there must be a feeling that observance of the rules of the organization is important as a matter of principle,—that, even though some particular breach of the rules may be unimportant in itself, respect for the rules is vital to the efficient working of the organization.

This attitude of mind represents a very complete break with the old Chinese tradition. In the old imperial system there had been a very strong loyalty to the system in general and to its official ideology and a certain amount of loyalty to the emperor and the ruling dynasty. But apart from this the whole emphasis had been on personal relations. When personal loyalties or personal obligations conflicted with impersonal loyalties or observance of regulations it was expected that personal obligations would prevail. And to some extent this was officially recognized. The point can be illustrated from one of the early Sino-British conflicts. In the mid-eighteenth century Anson brought a British warship to Canton in defiance of the Chinese regulations after a fight with the forts defending the river. The local officials were determined to make him pay the normal harbour dues on merchant ships as the only way of being able to excuse their failure to prevent his entry when it was reported to Peking.

Anson was equally determined not to pay harbour dues which were not levied on warships in Europe. The deadlock was broken when a serious fire broke out in Canton and the crew of the *Centurion* did valuable work as volunteer firemen. After Anson had created a personal obligation for services rendered to the city of Canton the local officials were willing to allow a breach of the regulations about harbour dues without waiting for this action to be approved from Peking.

So long as this tradition of the priority of personal obligations remained, large-scale organizations under Chinese management tended to be less efficient than those under foreign management. For a long time the foreign-run Maritime Customs and Post Office were the oustandingly efficient official organizations in China. Even in private business the smaller Chinese firms were often very efficient but the larger firms were seldom able to compete with the large-scale foreign-run business. And this lower efficiency could usually be traced to a failure to realize the importance of rules or to the superiority of personal to impersonal loyalties. Where many Westerners went wrong was in ascribing this lower efficiency to some unchangeable factor such as racial qualities instead of to a tradition which could be changed, and, to a considerable extent, has been changed.

One very important reason for the Communist victory in China was that Communist administration was much more efficient than Kuomintang administration. A great deal of Kuomintang administration still retained the old traditions of personal loyalty and personal authority. Even the people who were trying to do a good job tended to think in terms of extending their personal authority so that they could then order what was right rather than in terms of enforcing an impersonal system of rules which would ensure that the organization did what was right. Some of the leading Kuomintang officials who were hopelessly corrupt by Western standards were fairly honest men by their own standards. They would go to considerable trouble to fulfil the obligations they recognized, to their relations, to their followers, or even to their fellow provincials. Only they were not prepared to subordinate these personal obligations to the impersonal obligations of impartially enforcing the law or making their organization work efficiently.

The Communists started with the great advantage of loyalty

being to the Party much more than to any individual leaders. When the U.S. Army Observers' Section first came to Yenan they asked people how they could be sure that General Ch'en Yi, far away in Central China, would not try to set up as a local warlord. This was the kind of problem which worried the Kuomintang authorities and which they took elaborate, and often efficiency destroying precautions to deal with. The Communists found it hard to understand the question. The answer, of course, was that the primary loyalty of Ch'en Yi's officers was to the Party and not to him and that if he had tried to set himself against the central authority hardly any of his men would have followed him.

One could also see in the war-time Communist organization the beginnings of the de-personalization of authority as well as the de-personalization of loyalty. Some key organizations, such as the army supply system, were very efficient even by Western standards and this efficiency depended on a strictly enforced system of rules and accounting. In less vital organizations the old traditions lingered on. People did not consider the observance of rules to be a matter of principle and would subordinate the regulations to such considerations as not causing someone to lose face; and the result was lower efficiency. The point at which Communist efficiency really does break down is when the requirements of functionally rational action come into conflict with the Party Line. But this point was not often reached during the civil war.

The question which remains is why Western influences in China were successful in their totalitarian and not in their democratic form? Here it is possible to suggest a number of explanations all of which may be contributing factors. One such factor is that the democratic powers in the West have very seldom given support to democracy in China. After the 1911 revolution the Western powers backed Yuan Shih-k'ai and not Sun Yat-sen and the granting of large foreign loans to Yuan Shih-k'ai, which he did not have the legal authority to borrow, was decisive in enabling him to establish his independence of parliamentary control. In the 1920's, Sun Yat-sen turned to the Soviet Union for support only after he had failed to get any support from the Western democracies who were more inclined to back the warlord régimes. In the 1940's the Chinese liberals

got a lot of verbal praise from the American government but never any practical support against their opponents. A possible explanation for all this can be found in Western prejudices about racial superiority. I remember the one long conversation I had with General Hurley in which he said something like this: "Do you really believe that China can ever become a great power. Just look at these people! How can they ever reach equality with us?" And it is a very easy step from this attitude of despising the Chinese people to thinking that they must have a strong man to rule over them.

Another factor is that Western democracy never supplied any theoretical system which could be applied to Chinese conditions. Western political theory had a lot to say about the working of democratic institutions and the rule of law in societies where there was a tradition of democracy and law enforcement. It had almost nothing to say about the problem of how to set up a democratic system on the debris of a collapsing totalitarian system, or on how to secure the rule of law in a society where the way to power lay in the possession of a private army. As a result Chinese liberals have often operated in a world of complete unreality. So long as anyone with military power or political influence could ignore the law all talk about the rule of law in China was meaningless. But a great deal of work was put into drawing up constitutions and legal systems which would have been excellent if anyone had taken any notice of them.

On this point some of Sun Yat-sen's ideas were basically sound. His description of the Chinese people as a "heap of sand" is appropriate for a situation in which a totalitarian system has collapsed. The totalitarian system was based on the enforcement of a single ideology and a deep hostility to all organizations outside the official system. Once the single organizing principle has disappeared nothing is left but the "universal distrust" which Williams noted in the old system. In this situation Sun Yat-sen's concept of "political tutelage" did offer a possibility for a satisfactory policy. The empirical evidence is too small to give any certainty but what evidence there is indicates that effective democratic government has only developed either as a result of a long and gradual evolution or else as a result of a period of something like "political tutelage", either under a

colonial power as in the British Commonwealth or under a native dictatorship as in Turkey. Sun Yat-sen's plan under which elected governments were to start in the hsien, then extend to the provinces and finally to the centre would have been something like the process under which parts of the British Empire have developed from colonies to self-governing dominions. A realistic democratic theory for China should probably have started with accepting some form of "political tutelage" as a practical necessity and concentrated on the problem of how to make it work. That is, how to ensure that the group which has managed to seize power by military force will use this power to train the people for democracy and not degenerate into a new ruling group which the people are not allowed to control? There is probably no system which would absolutely guarantee that political tutelage would develop into democracy and not degenerate into tyranny, but there are conditions which would favour one development rather than the other. In particular free discussion and criticism are likely to be a very strong influence in preventing the ruling group from using its power in ways contrary to its proclaimed principles.

In fact, perhaps because of the absence of a satisfactory democratic theory, both the Kuomintang and the Communists accepted Leninist party organization. This did seem to offer the possibility of at least getting something done in a situation where the normal Western type of political organization seemed to be quite helpless. But the acceptance of Leninist organization with its doctrine of "democratic centralism" implied a decisive rejection of the philosophical assumptions behind Western science.

This may seem an extreme statement but I think it can be justified. The assumption behind Leninist organization and democratic centralism is that it is possible to arrive at certain knowledge on the basis of the data available at any particular time. The knowledge may be incomplete but it is essentially correct and liable to correction only in detail. Having arrived at the truth the Leninist party then proceeds to act on it with complete discipline and unity. Given the assumption of this "essentialist" philosophy totalitarian organization is a perfectly logical conclusion. If it is assumed that a system of final and absolutely certain truths is known, then it is quite logical to

believe that society should be organized to secure the universal acceptance of these truths. The choice between using force and using persuasion is purely a matter of expediency.

But Western science has come from the combination of two beliefs; firstly a faith that nature is orderly and that there are no definable limits to the extent to which it can be understood and controlled by the human mind through the combination of experiment and reasoning; secondly, a humility about the degree of understanding attainable by any actual human mind. A good illustration of this last belief was Newton's famous saying that in his work he had only been like a small boy playing with the more curious pebbles and shells on the beach while the whole ocean of truth lay undiscovered before him. The best short statement I know of the view of science implied by these assumptions was given by Professor Herbert Dingle, "We can no longer say 'The world is like this' or 'The world is like that'. We can only say, 'Our experience up to the present is best represented by a world of this character; I do not know what model will best represent the world of tomorrow, but I do know that it will co-ordinate a greater range of experience than that of today'."

On this view of science it is never possible for any group of people to say, "Our knowledge is essentially correct and we will proceed to act on it without allowing any further discussion or criticism." On the contrary it is only by a process of continuous criticism and discussion that the knowledge on which any human organization acts can be kept as near to the truth as is possible. In a great many cases the fallacy behind democratic centralism can be seen without bringing in these philosophical complications. Many policy decisions are taken on the basis of data which ordinary common sense would show to be incomplete; which means that the decision, which the Leninist party will not allow to be criticized, cannot be anything more than the most likely hypothesis on the data available when it was made and that any new data may make some other hypothesis more likely.

As against Toynbee's view that China has taken over Western technology while rejecting Western religion I would suggest that developments could equally well be explained by the hypothesis that China has taken over Western technology while rejecting Western science.

It is another serious defect of Toynbee's system that he makes no distinction between science and technology, whereas the distinction is, in fact, very real. Technology takes the model of the world which science has reached at any particular time and accepts it without question as the basis for practical applications. Science is continually examining its model of the world in the light of new experience or further discussion in order to see if it needs to be changed or improved to give a better co-ordination of experience. To put it crudely, the technologist is a man who is quite satisfied with taking a formula from a text book and using it for some practical problem. The scientist is a man who is always asking questions about the formula; how well it fits the facts, whether a different formula might not be more accurate or more general, how it fits into a wider system of knowledge and so on.

A totalitarian system like that of imperial China which has completely lost touch with contemporary science may find even technology disturbing. But in normal circumstances a totalitarian régime has nothing to fear from the technologist. The man who takes his scientific principles without question from one text book will usually take his political principles without question from another text book. The scientist who is always examining accepted principles to see if they are justified by experience or whether they should not be changed or improved is a subversive character, except in a democracy which is not afraid of free discussion and would be willing to change any policy if the results of discussion and investigation indicated that some alternative policy would be better. (This is slightly over-simplified because, to a considerable extent, the scientific outlook can be kept in a watertight compartment. Many men who are genuine scientists in their own technical field are completely uncritical in their acceptance of political or philosophical theories. It remains true that any general spread of the scientific outlook is dangerous for any totalitarian system.)

The West certainly did not present science at all clearly to China. If Arnold Toynbee fails to see the distinction between science and technology in 1952, Sun Yat-sen or Ch'en Tu-hsiu can hardly be blamed for not seeing it thirty years earlier. The Chinese decision to accept Leninism in the 1920's is quite understandable, but this has meant that both leading parties in China

have been totalitarian. Neither has been willing to allow the question of whether or not it was acting so as to promote its proclaimed objectives to be subject to scientific test by free discussion and investigation of the evidence.

Totalitarianism was less complete under the Kuomintang. In theory the Kuomintang claimed to be organized on the principle of democratic centralism but in practice it was never a monolithic party and some groups in it were definitely anti-totalitarian. But though these groups had considerable influence at certain periods they never became dominant against the groups which were totalitarian. Sun Yat-sen's *San Min Chu I* was not taken for what it was, a set of rather hastily prepared lectures containing some valuable insights and suggestions but needing considerable development and modification. Instead it was made into a sacred text which had to be accepted without criticism. Chiang Kai-shek's *China's Destiny* contains several passages denouncing Communism and Western liberalism as equally unsuited to China, and its ideal is a return to an improved version of the old Confucian system. Ch'en Li-fu was avowedly a neo-Confucian and, as Minister of Education, did his best to bring the universities under complete Party control. Tai Li, head of the main secret police organization, explicitly stated his objective of a monolithic state system. The freedom which did exist under Kuomintang rule was not so much the result of an approval of freedom by the dominant leaders in the Kuomintang as of their organization being too disunited and too incompetent to suppress freedom effectively. If one is going to have a secret police organization at all there is a good deal to be said for preferring a corrupt and inefficient one, but this hardly provides a satisfactory basis for the development of democracy.

In the Chinese Communist Party one could, at one time, see non-totalitarian tendencies. There was a period when the Communists were beginning to think about the sort of questions which would be prompted by a scientific outlook, such as, How can we tell when the Communist Party does represent the masses? As a result they were beginning to arrive at conclusions which were highly heretical from the viewpoint of Stalinist orthodoxy. If these trends had continued and become dominant the result would have been a non-totalitarian form of Communism but, in fact, they practically disappeared after 1946.

This is only a partial explanation for the victory of the totalitarian form of Western ideas. However, this victory is a fact from which we must try to extrapolate if we want to make predictions. A simple extrapolation of present trends would indicate the gradual emergence of a typical totalitarian society with a privileged ruling group maintaining its power by the enforcement of a single official ideology. The régime is likely to remain more competent than the old Confucian system or the Kuomintang but the exceptional competence which was so important in bringing it to power is likely to decline through a gradual expansion of the field in which official orthodoxy comes into conflict with the requirements of functionally rational action and through the inherent conservatism of a stabilized hierarchical organization.

But this simple extrapolation of present trends is not altogether a safe one to make because there are elements of instability in the situation. One common but, I think, quite erroneous, assumption is that the Chinese Communists are doing what they intend to do. As against this, I would argue that, because they have rejected scientific thinking over a large field of action, they have made themselves incapable of acting in a way that is likely to produce the results they intend. In the future, the typical totalitarian society may become the consciously accepted objective of the ruling group. At present, the limited evidence from outside observers indicates that Chinese Communism is still much less cynical than Soviet Communism, that many leaders retain considerable attachment to altruistic objectives. If this is so, the continuance of present trends depends on continued isolation from scientific thinking. If the Chinese Communists ever started to check their theories against empirical evidence and to ask, What policies actually serve the interests of the masses? or, What policies are actually likely to promote peace? the result would be a drastic shift in policy leading, most probably, to a return to the trend which was just beginning in the late 1930's and early 1940's which would lead to a system radically different from Stalinist Communism. This would imply that China had accepted Western science as well as Western technology.

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The George Ernest Morrison Lecture in Ethnology was founded by Chinese residents in Australia in honour of the late Dr G. E. Morrison, a native of Geelong, Victoria, Australia.

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Third: J. S. MacDonald (Director, National Art Gallery, New South Wales), "The History and Development of Chinese Art", 3 May 1934.

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Sixth: Dr Chun-Jien Pae (Consul-General for the Republic of China), "China Today: With Special Reference to Higher Education", 4 May 1937.

Seventh: A. F. Barker (Prof. Textile Industries, Chiao-Tung Univ., Shanghai, China), "The Impact of Western Industrialism on China", 17 May 1938.

Eighth: Prof. S. H. Roberts (Vice-Chancellor of The University of Sydney), "The Gifts of the Old China to the New", 5 June 1939.

Ninth: His Grace the Archbishop of Sydney, Howard Mowll, "West China as Seen through the Eyes of the Westerner", 29 May 1940.

Tenth: Dr W. G. Goddard (President of the China Society of Australia), "The Ming Sheng. A Study in Chinese Democracy", 5 June 1941.

Eleventh: Prof. D. B. Copland (Vice-Chancellor, The Australian National University), "The Chinese Social Structure", 27 September 1948.

Twelfth: Prof. J. K. Rideout (Dept. of Oriental Languages, Univ. of Sydney), "Politics in Medieval China", 28 October 1949.

Thirteenth: C. P. FitzGerald (Visiting Reader in Oriental Studies, The Australian National University), "The Revolutionary Tradition in China", 19 March 1951.

Fourteenth: The Rt. Hon. H. V. Evatt (Leader of the Opposition in the Commonwealth Parliament), "Some Aspects of Morrison's Life and Work", 4 December 1952.